

**TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE  
EMERGENCY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 17, 2020  
3:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: 3:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL: By Rick Bella; Council members present - Rick Bella, Shawn Pettit, Leonard White, and Jeff Minchuk.  
By Rick Bella; Other present – Eugene Velazco, Chanda Flowers, Matt Lake, Kevin Markle, Joi Whiteside, Joe Petruch, and Pat Reardon

CONSENT AGENDA: Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for March 17, 2020  
Approval of Town Council meeting Minutes of March 10, 2020

Councilman Minchuk motioned that the CONSENT AGENDA be accepted and approved as presented. Councilman Pettit seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a vote of four (4) yes and zero (0) no.

GENERAL ORDERS: By Rick Bella with contributions from Councilmen Minchuk, White, and Pettit and input by Matt Lake, Kevin Markle, Judge Eugene Velazco and Chanda Flowers, Police Chief Petruch, and Pat Reardon

1. The discussion to Close all Merrillville town buildings and offices and direct that all employees to work from home into the foreseeable future was lead by Councilman Bella. Councilmen White, Minchuk, and Pettit participated with comments from Judge Velazco, Chanda Flowers, and Kevin Markle. Pat Reardon presented a draft PSA regarding the proposed closure of town properties.

Following the discussions Councilman Minchuk motioned that the all Town facilities be closed and that all Town employees work from home until April 6, 2020. Additionally, that as recommended by Street Superintendent Markle that the Public Works Department staff be allowed to work "On Call". Last, that the Town Council authorize Town Council President Bella and Town Manager Reardon to do what they deem necessary to protect the Town, its employees, residents, and businesses alike during this COVID crisis. His motion was seconded by Councilman Pettit. No discussion. The motion carried by a vote of four (4) yes and zero (0) no.

2. A recommendation to continue payment of all salaries for town employees during public building closures was presented by Councilman Bella. Councilmen White, Pettit, and Minchuk all spoke favorably of the recommendation and voiced encouragement and support of Town employees.

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Councilman Minchuk motioned that the Town continue to pay all salaries for town employees during public building closures. Councilman Pettit seconded the motion. The motion carries by a vote of four (4) yes and zero (0) no.

3. Town Attorney Svetanoff presented the Draft Public Service Announcement (PSA) referencing the Governor Holcomb's executive Order 20-08 Closure of Town facilities. He explained that the Merrillville PSA was in line with similar Federal and state announcements and that it provide sufficient coverage to the Town.

Following a brief question and answer the Town Council unanimously approved the Draft and directed Attorney Svetanoff to finalize it and coordinate the distribution of copies to Town officials and staff with Town Manager Reardon.

4. Judge Velazco and Town Court Staffer Chanda Flowers requested permission to enter Town Hall once a week to handle immediate court matters. Following a brief discussion involving all town council members their request was approved. Judge Velazco will communicate with Town Manager Reardon what day he and a staff member will be in the building. They will come in and out of the "Court" door located on the building's south side.

Relatedly, Planning and Building Director Shelia Shine requested that she and her department be allowed to continue and complete the scheduled Inspections on file. The Town Council membership agreed with Ms. Shine and approved the staff to complete all scheduled Fire & Building Inspections. Stipulations are that the staff must practice social distancing and that the project site is clear.

Police Chief Petruch gave a report on the conditions in the department and status of the Town. He reported that they've implemented health & safety measures within and outside of the department and that the Town is relatively quiet.

5. Councilman Pettit motioned that the Town Council take no action on the proposed CCD Fund ordinance and that it remain tabled. His motioned was seconded by Leonard White. No discussion. The motion carried by a vote of four (4) yes and zero (0) no.

ADJOURNEMENT; Councilman Pettit motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Minchuk seconded his motion. The motion carried by a vote of four (4) yes and zero (0) no. The meeting ended at 3: 55 P.M.